

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
24 NOVEMBER 2011  
7.30 - 9.00 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Baily, Mrs Birch, Ms Brown, Finnie, Harrison, Heydon, McLean, Turrell, Virgo and Worrall

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Angell, Mrs Angell and Ms Whitbread  
Mr D Moss, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth  
Ms S Cauchi, Parent Governor Representative  
Ms C Mitchell, Kerith Family Church

**In Attendance:**

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny  
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive  
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services

**35. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

The Committee noted the attendance of the following Substitute Members:

Councillor Baily for Councillor Angell  
Councillor Worrall for Councillor Mrs Angell

**36. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 15 September 2011 and 21 September 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising, not already on the agenda:

Minute 20: Responses to Overview and Scrutiny Report: Addendum to the report relating to the review of the Bracknell Healthspace - The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel had considered the addendum report at its November meeting.

Minute 21: Executive Forward Plan – A working Group of the Commission had been formed to examine the Policy on Directed Surveillance and use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)

Minute 26: Overview and Scrutiny Public Participation Scheme – The scheme had been approved by the Governance and Audit Committee and would be presented to full Council for approval on 30 November 2011.

Minute 28: Work Programme – The Leader and the Corporate Management team had been consulted on the revised work programme for Overview and Scrutiny.

Minute 29: Updates from Panel Chairmen – Representative members who decided to step down from representative duties were not ordinarily subject to exit interviews.

Minute 34: Call-in of Executive Decision – Implementation of Older Persons Accommodation and Support Services Strategy – A request had been made for clarification of the decision process for disposal of land at the Binfield Nursery site.

The Executive had reconsidered decision I030320 and subsequently resolved to confirm its original decision. The reasoning behind this decision had been circulated to members on 28 September 2011.

**37. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

**38. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**39. Review of Medium Term Objectives**

The Commission considered the letter sent by the Leader of the Council in response to a letter of the working group of the Commission on the review of the new Medium Term Objectives.

The working group's Lead Member expressed concern that the new Medium Term Objectives appeared to overstate the Council's role in development programmes when in actuality the Council was acting more in the role of a facilitator. Concern was also expressed that the level of detail in the new Medium Term Objectives was more than was necessary in such a strategic document. Neither of these concerns affected the wording of the revised Medium Term Objectives.

The Commission noted the response of the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member's concerns. It was agreed that these concerns would be shared with the Executive before the Medium Term Objectives were considered by full Council on 30 November 2011.

**40. Review of Highway Maintenance**

The Lead Member of the Working Group reviewing highways maintenance presented the Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development's response to the Working Group's interim report.

It was noted that the Executive Member's response to proposals that greater contractual use of Ringway's services be made was considered vague and clarification would be sought from the Executive Member.

The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel would be considering the Executive Member's response to the report and examining the split in the highways engineering function.

A meeting had been scheduled to discuss the Executive Member's comments in more detail and to develop the work programme.

The Chairman of the Commission undertook to write to the Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development to express the Commission's disappointment at her failure to attend the meeting.

#### 41. **Economic and Skills Development Partnership**

The Assistant Chief Executive gave a presentation in respect of the work of the Economic and Skills Development Partnership.

It was reported that following the publication of the Economic Development Strategy in July 2011 the Partnership had: appointed a new Chairman, refreshed its membership and developed new terms of reference. The Partnership was now chaired by a former director of 3M who was currently an Executive member of the Thames valley Local Enterprise Partnership. As a result of these changes the Partnership had become more enthusiastic and business orientated with a greater focus on developing inward investment and increasing the availability of local jobs.

The Partnership's current work programme included: the promotion of Bracknell Forest as a place to do business, the development of strategic links with Chinese businesses, working to improve the broadband infrastructure in the Borough and the development of a careers event for the Borough's year 11 students.

Arsing from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- A list of the Group's membership would be circulated
- Previously the Partnership had focused on the impact that the economic downturn had had on residents and businesses in the Borough and putting support and advice into place to help people
- The development of links with China was a two way process and would involve the sharing of business expertise to help Chinese businesses to grow and develop as well as working to attract Chinese companies to invest in the area
- The Partnership's inward investment strategy was being developed and this would be circulated to the Commission in due course
- Additional Government funding was available for Broadband improvements, which would be subject to a local procurement exercise which would be open to any provider who wished to bid
- In addition to signposting residents experiencing financial difficulties to sources of advice and guidance the Council supported the local Citizen's Advice Bureau and were working with the Berkshire Credit Union to develop the service locally

The Commission stressed that improvement of the broadband infrastructure would be a vital part of attracting businesses to the area. It was acknowledged that the speed at which technology developed meant it was impractical to incorporate the provision of superfast broadband in new developments into planning policies. The Commission Chairman undertook to arrange a meeting interested Members to discuss the matter in more detail with the Assistant Chief Executive.

The Commission thanked the Assistant Chief Executive for his update.

#### 42. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission noted the Forward Plan relating to corporate issues. The following issues were raised:

I029705: Asset Management Plan

The qualification put on the Asset Management Plan had been of a technical nature and had no material impact on the Plan. A comment on the recommendation on the external auditors report regarding the valuation of the council's assets would be provided.

I030458: All of Us Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes Annual Monitoring Report 2010-11

Members of the Commission would be contacted for their comments by email.

I031586: Designated Public Place Order (DPPO)

The introduction of a DPPO across Bracknell Town Centre would give the Police greater powers to take action against individuals consuming alcohol and committing anti-social behaviour. The DPPO had been endorsed by the Community Safety Partnership and had been considered by both Bracknell Town Council and Crowthorne Parish Council.

I027764: Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee Update Report

Current work on the Town Centre Regeneration included updating the Development Agreement and Section 106 agreements. Discussions with potential occupiers were ongoing and details would be announced as legalities were finalised.

Discussions regarding potential new locations were taking place with small service providers including the Look In and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

I031967: Legal Services – Benchmarking & Proposed Resilience Arrangement with Reading and West Berkshire

If approved this would enable the Council's Legal Services team to offer their services to the legal teams of Reading and West Berkshire Councils and enable them to access additional help and support during busy periods.

**43. Working Groups Update**

The Commission received a report providing an update on the progress of its Working Groups.

It was clarified that the ICT Strategy Review was only concerned with the Council's long term overarching strategy and was not related in any way to the refresh of members IT provision.

The Working Group reviewing the Neighbourhood Engagement Consultative Document had been keen to emphasise that town and parish councils should be encouraged to play a bigger role in community engagement.

The Commission noted the report.

**44. Updates from Panel Chairmen**

Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Turrell updated the Commission on the work of the Panel including:

- A Working Group would be set up to look at the modernisation of Older People's Services
- The Working group reviewing the Drug Strategy had met and scoped the review.

#### Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Mrs Birch updated the Commission on the work of the Panel, including:

- The Working Group reviewing the Common Assessment Framework would be meeting on 1 December to agree the draft report
- The School Meals contract would be going out for procurement shortly. The Working Group had been asked to comment on the procurement specification
- Future work areas would include the Early Intervention Strategy

#### Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Finnie updated the Commission on the work of the Panel including:

- The Panel was awaiting responses from companies involved in commercial sponsorship
- A working group had provided input to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document

#### Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Virgo updated the Commission on the work of the Panel which included:

- The working group on the Health Reforms had been temporarily suspended until the outcome of the legislative process was known
- A Working Group would be established to scrutinise the PCT's Shaping the Future Consultation.
- The possible convening of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel to examine the implications of the PCT's plans for the area

**CHAIRMAN**